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28 May 2009

IRQ103164.E

Iraq: Whether it is possible for an Iraqi citizen outside of Iraq to obtain a replacement national identity card without going back to Iraq; whether it is possible for a relative in Iraq to apply on behalf of the Iraqi citizen; documentation required.

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Consul of the Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Washington, DC stated that in order to obtain or replace a national identity card [Civil Status Identity Card, Jinseyah ID (IOM 25 May 2009)] "Iraqi law requires that an Iraqi citizen be physically present in Iraq" (Iraq 14 May 2009). The Consul also stated that "a relative in Iraq may not apply for a replacement identity card on behalf of the absent Iraqi citizen" (ibid.). In a telephone interview with the Research Directorate, a protection officer with the Office of the United Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Syria, who works with Iraqi refugees, corroborated that it was not possible for an Iraqi citizen to apply for a replacement national identity card from outside the country (UN 21 May 2009).

However, the Protection Officer stated that relatives in Iraq can obtain genuine national identity cards on behalf of others, although sometimes authorities request that applicants appear in person (ibid.). According to the Protection Officer, whether it is possible for relatives to obtain these documents depends on the profile of the case, the area and whether it is a new identity card or a replacement card (ibid.). The Protection Officer was aware of cases in which Iraqis outside of the country were able to obtain national identity cards through the help of relatives, but was also aware of cases where it had not been possible (ibid.). According to the Protection Officer, photographs of the applicant are required and may be enough documentation (ibid.). In an article about the difficulties Iraqis outside Iraq face in accessing identity documents needed for new passports, *Gulf News* reports that an Iraqi embassy official in Sana'a instructed Iraqi citizens to contact their relatives in Iraq for assistance in obtaining the documents; approximately 1,000 Iraqis were able to provide the embassy with the documents (*Gulf News* 26 Sept. 2007). According to *Gulf News*, identity cards were among the documents demanded (ibid.).

In contrast, a program officer for the International Organization for Migration (IOM), whose organization contacted the Civil Affairs Directorate of the Foreign Affairs Department in Baghdad, stated that it is possible for Iraqi citizens outside of Iraq to renew their national identity cards by submitting a request to the Iraqi embassy in the host country (IOM 25 May 2009). According to the Program Officer, the applicant must submit personal documents such as a

passport, an old civil identity card, a Jinseyah certificate card (which differs from the Jinseyah ID), photos, and a completed form (ibid.).

The Program Officer stated that it is also possible for an Iraqi citizen outside Iraq to arrange "special authorization" for a relative in Iraq to apply for the national identity card on behalf of the absent citizen (ibid.). He stated that the authorization document should be certified by the Iraqi embassy in the host country and re-certified by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Iraq, and that the relative should submit personal documents of the applicant such as the old civil identity card, Jinseyah certificate card, copy of the passport, photos, and/or other documents as needed (ibid.). According to the Program Officer, the procedures are "standard and unified all over the country" with only minor variations (ibid.).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Gulf News [Dubai]. 26 September 2007. "Iraqis Told Documents Needed for Passports." (Factiva)

International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Iraq. 25 May 2009. Correspondence from a program officer.

Iraq. 14 May 2009. Embassy of the Republic of Iraq in Washington, DC. Correspondence with the Consul.

United Nations (UN). 21 May 2009. Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Syria. Telephone interview with a protection officer.

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral Sources: Attempts to reach officials at the Embassy of Iraq in Ottawa were unsuccessful within time constraints.

Internet sources, including: Amnesty International (AI), European Country of Origin Information Network (ecoi.net), Freedom House.

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